

Coins

Beat grows faint for the quarter's drummer boy

By Roger Boye

THE COLONIAL drummer boy on the back side of the Bicentennial quarter is marching slowly into numismatic oblivion.

Treasury Secretary William Simon has ordered the United States Mint to discontinue use of the Bicentennial reverse designs at the start of production for 1977-dated coins. The announcement was something of a surprise since many coin collecting enthusiasts had thought the Treasury might continue use of the Bicentennial designs into 1977 and beyond.

Thus, the Bicentennial quarter drummer-boy design of Jack Ahr of Arlington Heights will be replaced with the bland-looking eagle-with-open-wings used on the reverse of Washington quarters dated from 1932 to 1974.

Similarly, Independence Hall, depicted on the reverse of the Bicentennial half-dollar, will be replaced with the presidential coat-of-arms motif used on the Kennedy half-dollars dated from 1964 to 1974. The Apollo 11 insignia on the Eisenhower dollars of 1971 to 1974 will replace the Liberty-Bell-superimposed-on-the-moon design used on the Bicentennial dollar coin.

The mint is in the process of producing millions of the Bicentennial coins, so it will be many years before "normal" versions of these coins, which are now found in circulation, command a collector's premium.

A CALIFORNIA collector has found a 1976-D Bicentennial quarter with an apparent significant error: the letters of the word "Liberty" and other parts of the obverse-side design are doubled slightly.

"[There is] significant doubling on all of the letters in Liberty, with a spread of about one-fourth of the width of the letters readily visible with low-power magnification," says Alan Herbert, noted coin-error specialist, in an article about the coin in Numismatic News Weekly.

Herbert adds that it is difficult to estimate the value of the coin, but he would guess uncirculated specimens should sell in the \$25 to \$50 range.

It is possible that as many as 300,000 to 500,000 of the doubled coins were produced. If a considerable quantity turns up in circulation, the value to coin-error collectors would drop.

THE OAK LAWN Coin Club's 10th annual show runs from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. today at the Oak Lawn VFW Hall, 9514 52d Av.

Admission is free.